

OLC 78-2399

18 July 1978

M.R.

T.P.

P. L. G.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: H.R. 13118, Foreign Language Translators Bill

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1. On 14 July 1978 from 1600 to 1700, I met with [redacted] Chief of Language School/Romance Language and [redacted] in the C&R conference room, to discuss the ramifications of H.R. 13118 which would establish a "Federal Translation Coordinating Council."

2. The overriding problem with the bill as drafted is that it is amorphous and all encompassing. One stated purpose of the Council would be, in general, to review the current state of translators, translating facilities and methods of translating now existing in the United States. This includes not only "Federal Government" translators but also those in the private sector and moreover, seems to include part-time as well as full-time translators. The Council, composed of ten persons, would include "Two representatives...who are involved in intelligence activities."

3. Although the problems are many and far reaching, some of the more blatant include:

a. Council's authority to "determine... (and recommend to Congress uniform) principles, standards and procedures for (all) translation." (Sec. 4(a)(7))

b. Council given utilization of..."information, studies, reports, statistics and other data...compiled by any (emphasis added) department, agency ..." (Sec. 4(b)(1))

c. Upon Council's request..."head of any (emphasis added) Federal department, agency...shall furnish such information as may be necessary for carrying out the functions of the Council..." (Sec. 4(b)(2))

d. "To the extent permitted by law, (emphasis added) all appropriate records and papers of the Council shall be made available for public inspection..." (Sec. 8)